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Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 USIA-06 CIAE-00
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INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
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AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 055242

FOR AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SOPN, MO

SUBJECT: MOROCCAN REPLY TO FEBRUARY 6 NEW YORK TIMES
EDITORIAL ON ARMS REQUEST

REFS: RABAT 1149 AND 1171 (NOTAL)

1. YOU SURMISED CORRECTLY THAT MOROCCAN EMBASSY WAS
UNAWARE OF KHATTABI RESPONSE TO FEBRUARY 6 NEW YORK TIMES
EDITORIAL, AND WE HAVE PROVIDED TEXT TO AMBASSADOR
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BENGELLOUN.

2. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF MOROCCAN EMBASSY LETTER TO TIMES,
WHICH WAS PRINTED FEBRUARY 19:

QUOTE: FEBRUARY 8, 1978, SIR: THE NEW YORK TIMES EDITORIAL,
"THE WRONG COIN FOR MOROCCO" (FEBRUARY 5) INDICATES A

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DISTORTED VIEW OF MOROCCO, A MISUNDERSTANDING OF THE FACTS--OR BOTH.

YOU SAY THAT MOROCCO HAS NO RIGHTFUL CLAIM OVER THE WESTERN SAHARA. THIS IS TOTALLY WRONG. PRIOR TO THE COLONIALIST PARTITION OF OUR COUNTRY, AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CENTURY, THIS TERRITORY WAS PART OF THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO. THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE IN THE HAGUE SUBSTANTIATED THAT FACT IN ITS FINDINGS IN NOVEMBER 1975, RULING THERE WERE JUDICIAL TIES AND ALLEGIANCES BETWEEN MOROCCO AND THE PEOPLE OF THE TERRITORY.

YOU SAY WHEN SPAIN WITHDREW ITS FORCES, THE SPANISH PARTITIONED THE TERRITORY BETWEEN MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA. THE REALITY IS THAT THE TRIPARTITE AGREEMENT BETWEEN SPAIN, MAURITANIA AND MOROCCO WAS APPROVED BY THE D'JAMAA (LOCAL ASSEMBLY) AND THE PARTITION WAS MADE ACCORDING TO THE FINDINGS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COURT AND FULLY RECOGNIZED THE KINSHIP OF THE LOCAL POPULATION WITH MAURITANIA ON THE ONE HAND, AND MOROCCO ON THE OTHER.

CONTRARY TO YOUR EDITORIAL, THE POLISARIO IS NOT A LIBERATION MOVEMENT. IT WAS CREATED BY ALGERIA TO FURTHER ITS OWN INTERESTS. FORBES MAGAZINE CALLS THE POLISARIO "A MIRAGE"--"NOMADS WHO ROAMED THE SAHARA BEFORE IT WAS RETURNED TO MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA".
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SOCIALIST ALGERIA, WHICH WOULD LIKE NOTHING MORE THAN SPREADING ITS OWN SYSTEM OVER THE ENTIRE AREA, GETS ITS SOPHISTICATED MILITARY EQUIPMENT--AS YOU REPORTED, FROM THE U.S.S.R., THROUGH COLONEL KADDAFI. I NEED NOT STRESS THE ROLES THAT BOTH BOUMEDIENNE AND KADDAFI HAVE PLAYED ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE AND, MOST PARTICULARLY, IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

YOU STATE THAT THE PREFERENCES OF THE 75,000 INHABITANTS OF THE SAHARA WERE IGNORED. THIS IS INCORRECT. THE LOCAL POPULATION WAS CONSULTED THROUGH ITS ELECTED ASSEMBLY--THE D'JMAA. FURTHERMORE, THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF ELECTIONS SINCE THAT TIME WHERE THE VOICE OF THE SAHARA POPULATION WAS HEARD--THE LATEST WHERE THIS POPULATION ELECTED FIVE MEMBERS TO THE PARLIAMENT OF MOROCCO.

YOU SAY THE UNITED STATES DOES NOT RECOGNIZE THE MOROCCAN AND MAURITANIAN CLAIMS OVER THE TERRITORY. IN NOVEMBER 1975, THE UNITED STATES VOTED IN FAVOR OF THE U.N. GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 3458 B, ACKNOWLEDGING THE

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MADRID AGREEMENT BY WHICH SPAIN RETURNED THE TERRITORY
TO MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA.

MOROCCO'S ROLE IN PRESIDENT SADAT'S PEACE EFFORTS WAS
DESIGNED, NOT TO GAIN "REWARDS", BUT BECAUSE HIS MAJESTY
KING HASSAN FELT THESE ACTIONS WERE IN THE INTEREST OF
WORLD PEACE.

THE UNITED STATES IS, OF COURSE, INTERESTED IN MAINTAINING
SOURCES OF ENERGY--BUT THE TRUTH IS THAT ALGERIA FINDS
THE UNITED STATES ITS SOLE CUSTOMER OF ANY SUBSTANTIAL
SIZE AND THE ALGERIANS NEED THE AMERICANS MORE THAN THE
AMERICANS NEED THE ALGERIANS.

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MOROCCO HAS ENJOYED A LONG RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED
STATES AND, FROM TIME TO TIME, HAS CALLED ON THIS POWERFUL
FRIEND FOR ASSISTANCE TO DEFEND ITS TERRITORIAL
INTEGRITY, TO ASSUME ITS SHARE OF RESPONSIBILITIES IN
AFRICA, AND TO AVOID FOREIGN INTERFERENCE ON THE AFRICAN
CONTINENT. BY VOICING OPPOSITION TO THE PROPOSED SALE
OF AIRCRAFT TO MOROCCO YOU SEEM TO FAVOR ALGERIA'S
HEGEMONIC AIMS AND YOU ALSO SEEM TO ENCOURAGE COMMUNIST
EXPANSION IN THIS CRITICAL AREA. YOURS SINCERELY,
ABDELKADER EL KADIRI, PRESS ATTACHE. END QUOTE. CHRISTOPHER

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